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REPORT

OF THE

REGENTS OF THE LUNATIC ASYLUM

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF SOUTH CAROLINA:

NOVEMBER, 1856.

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STATE DOCUMENTS

COLUMBIA, S. C.:

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## REPORT.

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*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives  
of the State of South Carolina :*

Gentlemen : I herewith transmit to your honorable body, the Annual Reports and Proceedings of the Board of Regents of the Lunatic Asylum. From the several reports, you will be fully informed of the state and management of the Institution for the past year.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

A. WALLACE,  
President of the Board of Regents.

November 5, 1856.

# REPORT

OF

## THE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS.

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### *To the Board of Regents of the Lunatic Asylum :*

The Committee, charged with the preparation of the annual report of the Regents to the Legislature, respectfully submit the following :

The subjects indicated by the Board as proper to be embraced in this report, involve a brief inquiry into the present condition of the institution, and the most feasible mode of enlarging its sphere of usefulness.

The accompanying reports of the Physician and Superintendent, furnish statistical details from which may be obtained full and accurate information respecting the health of the patients during the present year. The diminished mortality, evidenced by those communications, is matter of congratulation. The proportion which the number of deaths bears to the entire number of patients, is about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—exceeding but by a fraction the average ratio during the past twelve years, and more than  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. less than the proportion shown by the last annual report. The suddenness and irregularity of these fluctuations sufficiently illustrate the transitory and accidental nature of the circumstances which have sometimes occasioned a striking increase of mortality in our institution. Such phenomena have been frequently explained—in some instances as referable to the prevalence of epidemics—in others to the fact, that “in every institution many patients are admitted with shattered constitutions, whose vital powers are exhausted, and the recuperative energies of the system entirely destroyed,” and that the proportion of such patients varies at different periods. The latter is the explanation afforded by the physician’s report of 1850, of the great mortality of that year, and is no doubt frequently applicable to a like state of facts.

The Board, in its last annual report, sought to draw special attention to the crowded state of the institution, and respectfully, but strongly, urged



upon the Legislature, the propriety of granting an appropriation for the purpose of constructing a permanent subsidiary building on the eastern portion of the grounds now belonging to the Asylum. According to the plan submitted with that report, two tenements could be constructed in such a manner as to constitute a building complete in itself, and yet capable of forming, with any additions the Legislature may in future see fit to authorize, an entire and symmetrical structure, furnished with all the appliances which modern intelligence and philanthropy have devised for the comfort, health, and relief of the lunatic.

Such was the recommendation of the Regents in their last report; and the reasons which induced it have since increased rather than diminished, in cogency—the condition of the asylum, in respect to space, remaining the same, and the number of patients being somewhat greater during the present than the preceding year. That the basement-rooms of the main building are wholly unfit for use as dormitories, must be conceded by all. Exclusive of those, the eastern wing contains fifty-nine, the western, sixty-three, sleeping apartments. The former, and also the temporary buildings on the eastern grounds, are allotted to male patients, the latter to females. The inadequacy of the number of apartments, when compared with that of the patients in the institution, has been such during the present year, as to necessitate the use of the corridors as dormitories. In the western wing of the main building—now occupied by eighty-eight female patients—this evil is most sensibly felt; the number there sleeping in the corridors being greater than among the males, while nature and their habits of life render them less capable of enduring the injurious consequences of such an arrangement. Objections to the use of the corridor as sleeping apartments scarcely need to be stated. Some of those which will most readily suggest themselves are,—exposure of patients to currents of air,—the extension, to many, of the influence of disturbing and exciting causes, which might otherwise be restricted to one or a few,—and the substitution of an atmosphere, in a measure exhausted of its vitalizing principles, and poisoned by fetid exhalations, for the fresh air which the corridors were designed to furnish to those occupying the dormitories. These consequences are, of course, greatest—other things being equal—in institutions which, like ours, are unprovided with proper apparatus for warming the building, and for keeping up a forced ventilation.

The practice of applying the corridors to the use referred to, may be permitted in other hospitals, to a very limited extent, and merely as a temporary expedient, but can never form a permanent feature of any well-organized asylum for the insane. We have tolerated it—not without anxiety—and only in the hope that the deficiency which gave rise to it



would soon be supplied by the Legislature. Under a conviction of the propriety of restraining the growth of this practice, and finding the number of female patients to be increasing far beyond our ability to provide for them, the Board of Regents, during the past summer, directed the publication, in the newspapers, of a notice that no additional patients of that class would be received.

The remedy for these serious evils, which we would earnestly recommend to the favorable consideration of the Legislature, is that before mentioned, as suggested in the former report of the Board. The construction of the two tenements proposed, would enable the Board, by removing all the male patients from the building on the western grounds, and devoting it exclusively to the use of females, to afford ample accommodation to both sexes. The facilities for the complete ventilation of the main building could thus be greatly increased, and a more unobstructed circulation of air over the grounds immediately adjacent, obtained, by the removal of intersecting walls, now necessary, to secure the entire separation of the sexes.

That the condition of the institution requires some action, can scarcely admit of doubt; and if this be conceded, our recommendation, in addition to the considerations suggested, is likewise sustained by that of economy—involving as it does an expense far less than that of removal, or any other which has been proposed. For it will be observed that our suggestion is limited to the erection of such a structure as will relieve the present buildings of their excess, and does not contemplate, at all events for the present, the abandonment of the main building, which has been erected at so heavy a cost to the State. If, however, the Legislature, at any future period, shall deem it proper to construct a new asylum on the eastern grounds, according to the plan referred to, the proposed tenements, as has been stated, can form part of such a building; otherwise, they will of themselves constitute a complete structure, which may be used, for an indefinite length of time, as subsidiary to those already erected. The cost of the two tenements (if, as is purposed, ornament be dispensed with), together with the expense of removing the walls intersecting the grounds adjacent to the main building, will probably not exceed the sum of thirty thousand dollars. At all events we think that sum, with the unexpended balance of a former appropriation, would enable the Board to accomplish the desired object.

In making the foregoing recommendation, the important—perhaps controlling—influence, which its adoption would exert upon the vexed question of removal, has not been overlooked; but, so far from deeming that circumstance an objection to the step proposed, we regard it as furnishing an additional consideration in its favor. The protracted agitation of that question has produced evil, and, as far as we can perceive, evil only. It has stayed the



hand of improvement, disturbed previously existing harmony, and excited, in the minds of many, groundless apprehensions respecting the salubrity of the present location ; and we, therefore, appeal to the Legislature to set it at rest during the approaching session, by adopting some measure of relief—either that which we herein submit, or any other which its superior wisdom may devise.

Another subject to which it has been deemed necessary to solicit the attention of the Legislature, is the rate at which we are required to admit pauper patients into the institution. The rate fixed by the existing law is \$100 per annum. That amount was, perhaps, sufficient, at the time of its establishment, to pay the necessary expenses of a patient ; but the subsequent increase in the price of provisions and other necessaries, has rendered it wholly inadequate for that purpose, and has cast upon the institution the burden of contributing largely to the support of such persons. This, we think, was never contemplated by the Legislature. The system, established for the benefit of the indigent, imposes upon each district of the State the duty of supporting its own poor, and the Lunatic Asylum was not, we submit, intended to form part of that system, or to transfer or lessen the pre-existing obligation of maintenance, but was designed to afford facilities for the proper medical and moral treatment of insanity, and for that purpose alone. Under present circumstances, the profit derived from pay patients is exhausted in supplying the deficiency in the allowance made for paupers ; and the Regents are thus deprived of the means necessary to enable them to make any improvement of an important character. Indeed, the embarrassments of the present year, together with the increasing number of that class of patients, and the consequent further exclusion of pay patients, warn us, that unless some remedy is promptly applied, the income of the institution will not much longer continue to defray its current expenses. According to a careful, and, we believe, accurate calculation, made by the Superintendent, pursuant to a resolution of the Board of Regents, one hundred and sixty dollars per annum is the lowest rate which will compensate the Asylum for the actual expense incurred in the maintenance of a patient ; and we therefore recommend to the Legislature an increase of the present rate to that amount.

The present organization of our institution is certainly far from perfect ; and yet the task of remodeling it, is by no means so easy as some may imagine. As long as harmony prevailed among our officers, and a spirit of mutual concession was manifested, its defects were not so apparent ; but during the last two years, the difficulties arising from this source have increased to such an extent, as to convince us of the necessity of some change. Deeming it wiser, in the first instance, to attempt an amendment of the existing sys-



tem, rather than to adopt one entirely new, the Board has striven so to modify the regulations of the institution as to reconcile the conflicting claims of the chief officers, and thus retain the services of both. In the hope of accomplishing this end, the Board suspended the new organization in contemplation at the time of the preceding report, which would otherwise have gone into operation in February last, and again undertook to administer the affairs of the institution according to the system of rules, as amended. The experiment has terminated in utter failure, and we are now fully satisfied—and purpose acting on the conviction—that harmony cannot be restored except by a radical change of organization.

The Physician, during the present year, has exhibited his usual ability in his appropriate department; the Superintendent continues to sustain the high character for capacity and fidelity which he has borne through many years of service; while the Chaplain, by happily blending with his pious zeal, that prudence and gentleness of manner so necessary in the discharge of the delicate duties of his office, has contributed largely to the welfare—temporal as well as spiritual—of those among whom he is called to labor. The subordinate officers have given satisfaction. The report of the proper committee will exhibit the financial condition of the institution.

WM. H. TALLEY, }  
J. U. ADAMS. } *Committee.*



## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

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LUNATIC ASYLUM, Nov. 5th, 1856.

TO THE REGENTS:—

*Gentlemen* : In conformity with the requirements of your Board, I herewith present my annual report.

On the 5th November last, there were in the house 171 patients ; received during the year, 67 ; making 238. Of this number, 22 have been sent home as cured ; 18 have died, and 11 were removed by their friends ; leaving now under care 187 ; of whom 98 are paying, and 89 are pauper patients ; 100 males, and 87 females.

The number of male and female patients being about equal last year (85 to 86), the excess of the former at this time may be attributed to the necessity which was imposed on the Board of Regents, by the over-crowded state of the female portion of the building, to refuse the admission of females ; after which resolution was published, several applications were made without success, by persons who would have paid the highest rate, while pauper applicants were received—a state of things, though unavoidable on your part, and but an act of justice to those now in the house, is not the less to be regretted ; and if this objection to our receiving paying patients should continue, the consequence is but too obvious. It should be remembered, in connection with this part of the subject, that our Asylum is not only a self-sustaining institution, but that for many years it has contributed largely to the support of pauper lunatics, and is at this time paying at the rate of \$6,500 per annum, at least, to that object. Dr. LaBorde, in his comprehensive report, published in 1842, when living, negro hire, &c., was much below the prices of the present time, ascertained and proved that the cost of maintaining a pauper in this institution was a fraction over \$160 per annum. I have endeavored to go over the calculation recently, and make the amount \$165.

To meet such contingencies, judicious economy has been exercised, as will appear by the financial report ; at the same time you have abundant evidence in the character of the bills presented, as well as from personal observation throughout the year, and from the general appearance of the patients, that they are supplied with the comforts of life, and in every respect well-cared for.



The Committee of Regents, appointed to draw the annual report for the Legislature, having investigated all matters connected with the Asylum, will doubtless bring many important topics to your notice, which should otherwise have been mentioned in this report.

At the request of Gov. Adams, I made a written communication to him, relative to the present condition, wants, and requirements of the Lunatic Asylum, a copy of which letter is at your disposal.

The ills connected with an over-crowded building, though discouraging, have not served to paralyze the action of the officers and attendants in their discharge of duties, which, under the most favorable circumstances, are trying and perplexing beyond the conception of any one who has never spent a day within the wards of an asylum. To your generous confidence and encouragement am I largely indebted for the satisfaction and support experienced amid the "wear and tear" of mind and body, in the discharge of those duties which belong to the several offices which I fill in this institution, and to which my time has been exclusively devoted for the past twenty years. For the success which may have attended my efforts in the general management of the patients, and for their preservation from accidents and other evils, under a kind Providence, I feel indebted to the vigilance and care of our excellent corps of attendants and nurses. They have been, as heretofore, required to spend their whole time in the service of the Asylum and among the patients. The office of an attendant is one of unceasing labor and solicitude;—to overcome the fatigue and its consequences, their duties are varied, and one afternoon in the week is given to each one for recreation. So well has the duty of every one in the employment of the Asylum been performed, that it would be difficult, and perhaps wrong, to discriminate.

Rev. E. B. Hort continues to perform the duties of chaplain judiciously and faithfully, and with decided benefit to our patients. As a regular attendant in the chapel, I have been able to witness the soothing influence of religious service upon our most insane.

Mrs. Burchell, on account of feeble health, resigned her situation as matron on the 1st inst. In parting with Mrs. Burchell, it is due her to acknowledge that while her health permitted, she discharged her duty, to the extent of her ability, with cheerfulness, and with especial kindness to the patients.

Thos. Leavy, our head attendant, has been brought to your favorable notice for eighteen successive years; he continues to perform his duties with his accustomed zeal, judiciously and kindly.

Mrs. Due, Mrs. Boyd, and Mrs. O'Neal, in their respective places, are faithful and efficient.



Our patients are supplied with reading from our library, which is always accessible to such as desire to read.

To the many newspaper editors we are under continued obligations for their papers which are gratuitously and regularly sent us. The occupation and amusements afforded our inmates are such as may be found in all well organized institutions for the insane, and have heretofore been specified.

In the present report many interesting topics have not been alluded to, for reasons mentioned, as well as from the fact that in my former reports they have been fully spread before you. Permit me, in conclusion, to refer you to my report as Secretary and Treasurer.

Respectfully,

J. W. PARKER,

*Superintendent and Resident Physician Lunatic Asylum of S. C.*



*Receipts and Disbursements of the Lunatic Asylum, for the year  
ending November 5, 1856.*

1855.			
Nov. 5.	Amount in Bank.....	\$4,666 14	
1856.			
Nov. 5.	Collected to date.....	34,564 85	
			39,230 99
	DISBURSED.		
1855.			
Nov. 27.	For supplies and salaries.....	\$1,890 64	
Dec. 10.	For supplies and salaries.....	2,356 71	
Jan. 3.	For J. W. Parker's salary to 1st January.....	1,500 00	
9.	For supplies.....	3,339 81	
31.	For salaries and supplies.....	2,326 60	
Feb. 25.	For salaries and supplies.....	2,969 87	
Apr. 3.	For salaries and supplies.....	2,520 20	
23.	For salaries and supplies.....	2,422 87	
30.	For salary, J. W. Parker.....	500 00	
May 12.	For supplies and salaries.....	3,279 91	
June 10.	For Dr. Trezevant, salary and supplies.....	3,014 14	
July 1.	For J. W. Parker's salary.....	500 00	
14.	For salaries.....	1,050 00	
Aug. 4.	For supplies, Negro hire, &c.....	2,391 20	
20.	For supplies.....	1,481 70	
Sept. 17.	For supplies and salaries.....	3,090 34	
Oct. 10.	For supplies and salaries.....	3,403 78	
			38,037 67
	Balance on hand.....		1,193 32

Amount due Asylum for paying patients on 5th inst.....\$8,726 67

And for paupers.....2,772 83

11,499 50

**J. W. PARKER,**

Secretary and Treasurer Lunatic Asylum of S. C.

We have examined the foregoing account, and find it correct, and properly vouched.

R. H. GOODWYN, }  
WM. H. TALLEY, } *Committee.*

November 19th, 1856.